RI DISTRICT 3240
CELEBRATING
25
YEARS OF SUCCESS

Rotary
MAITREE-II

Rotary

INTER-COUNTRY PEACE & FRIENDSHIP SEMINAR

28 FEB & 1 MAR, 2015

TOWN HALL, KALIMPONG, INDIA

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Rotary

INTER-COUNTRY PEACE & FRIENDSHIP SEMINAR

28 FEB & 1 MAR, 2015

TOWN HALL, KALIMPONG, INDIA

Rotary

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February 2015

Dear fellow Rotarians,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Inter Country Peace Seminar being held in Kalimpong.

This is a wonderful opportunity for Rotarians and friends of Rotary to come together for fellowship and inspiration.

I was introduced to Rotary as a high school student. Right away, I saw it was something I wanted to be a part of. Rotary was a prestigious organization in Taiwan when I was growing up, and at first, I mostly wanted the status of being a Rotarian.

But it didn't take long for me to realize that Rotary was about much more than having lunch with important people. Through Rotary, I have made my community and the world a better place. I have been touched by the stories of those we've helped in countries far from my own.

Rotary is something special and it is something I am proud to be a part of—not for what it gives me, but for what it lets me give to others. By putting *Service Above Self,* we set an example that cannot help but inspire those around us.

My motto is always "be positive, be active, be a friend," and Rotary embodies these values. In Rotary we set high goals, we work hard, and we care. In Rotary we find solutions, not excuses. Rotary is a light in our communities and a light in our hearts. It creates hope in our world and gives meaning to our lives. It fulfills a basic human desire to reach out a hand to others, to know we have made a difference.

I send my best wishes for a successful year to come, and I look forward to working together as we ***Light Up Rotary.***

Yours.

Gary C.K. Huang
2014-15 President, Rotary International

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

KALYAN BANERJEE
President, 2011-12

M E S S A G E

I am informed by DG Swapan Choudhury that Dist 3240 is releasing a Souvenir during the Inter Country Peace Seminar to be held at Kalimpong on 28th Feb and 1st March 2015.

Peace through Service has been one of Rotary's most effective themes in recent years. It says in 3 words, aptly and adequately of what Rotary and Rotarians are all about.

Let us keep finding ways for each of the countries in Rotary to get more involved in bringing Peace. It will help Rotary as much as it will help us too. Indeed, it will help make the world of the future.

Kalyan Banerjee
Trustee, Rotary Foundation (2013-17)

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M E S S A G E

Dear DG Swapanji ,

I am delighted to hear, that D 3240 is organising Inter country peace seminar to be held on February- March 1.
Our organisation, works on the principle, Peace is possible on earth.

I am confident, the deliberations at your seminar will be most useful in bringing peace on earth.

I wish your need based seminar, all the very best.

P T Prabhakar,
RI Director

M E S S A G E

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

I am pleased to know that RI District 3240 is going to organize Inter Country Peace Seminar, MAITREE II, from 28th – 01st March 2015 at Kalimpong and are coming out with a Souvenir on this occasion.

Rotary has been a votary of peace right from the very early times, and its basic objective has been peace on earth. The challenge taken by Rotary through their Peace Scholars Programs will definitely have an impact on the world in times to come.

I am sure that this seminar will build confidence, understanding and peace through people-to-people interaction, fellowship and opportunity for service, hence foster world understanding, goodwill, and peace by promoting and publicizing the Rotary Peace Centers program.

I extend my best wishes to DG Swapan Choudhury and all members of District 3240 for a successful year of service to the Rotary world. It is my sincere wish that you meet the challenges with confidence. Let the theme "Light up Rotary" be of special motivation to promote higher and higher involvement of all the members in your district in your journey to serve mankind.

Sushil Gupta, Padma Shri
Trustee, The Rotary Foundation (2014-18)
Director, Rotary International (2003-05)
Vice Chair, Joint Committee of Partnerships (2014-15)
Member, Audit Committee (2014-15)
Adviser, International Assembly Committee (2014-15)

PATHWAY TO PEACE

Peace is not as illusive as it is believed to be. The path is riddled with obstructions and at some places there is no path at all.

You must first believe in Peace. Live it daily. Your actions must speak loud and clear. The greatest blessings the human heart can know is World Peace and the world will never become better unless we ourselves become better and set an example before others.

Achieving Peace is no easy matter. You will fail at times but perseverance is the need of the time. It took over three decades to reach the summit of Mt. Everest. It took years and hundreds of experiments to invent a light bulb. Many success stories have many failures at its base. The winners don't give up. They win finally. Peace also has many failure stories, but if we persist, if we persevere, if we doggedly pursue – Peace will not be so elusive.

Peace results from like- minded aspirations. Everyone wants Peace. Why is it that we fail to achieve it? The reason is not far to seek. We want Peace on our terms. We do not want to listen to the other side. The best remedy, therefore, will be to listen to the other side. This can be achieved by a person-to-person interaction. If we are ready for some give and take, the task would be simpler.

Rotary has so many programmes under The Rotary Foundation and International Service that promotes this inter-personal dialogue. Once people meet, talk, interact and sincerely wish for Peace, the task would be easier. One of the most important trips a person ever takes is “to meet someone halfway”. If we don't meet halfway, Peace will be

lost. If we are ready, there is a chance for Peace. Paul Harris had rightly said "the best attribute of Rotary is "Toleration". We have to re-cultivate the art of Toleration.

Let the Club Leadership give its whole-hearted contribution and enthusiastic support to every good idea or initiative towards anything that may help even in the smallest way, in fostering Peace in this world full of conflicts. To establish this feeling amongst Rotarians, the Club leadership must put extra efforts to (a) keep Rotary simple (b) put more Rotary in Rotarians (c) make Rotarians know each other better.

As leaders of your respective Clubs, as the respected members of the community, let Rotary spread the message of Peace, of Love, of Co-existence, of Harmony and of Tolerance.

A wise oriental philosopher has said "when planning for a year – plant rice; when planning for ten years – plant trees; when planning for hundred years – plant people. Only people can promote peace. Let us start the process for Peace immediately.

Rtn. Ashok Mahajan
Chairman, Rotary Foundation India, 2012-14
Director, Rotary International 2007-09
Trustee, The Rotary Foundation 2009-13
Member, International PolioPlus Committee 2009-13
Chair RI Membership Development and Retention
Committee 2012-13

M E S S A G E

"My Dear Friends,

I am happy to send my message for your Souvenir, which will be released during Inter Country Peace Seminar, MAITREE II at Kalimpong on 28th February & 1st March, 2015. It would have been wonderful to be with you all on this occasion but due to prior commitments I am unable to do so. Such types of events definitely improves the Public Image of Rotary.

I am sure that the Peace Seminar will be a grant success

Sharmishtha joins me in wishing you all the very best as you **"Light Up Rotary"!**

Dr. Manoj Desai
RIDE (2015-17)

M E S S A G E

I am very pleased to know that the District 3240 is organising an Inter Country Peace Seminar "Maitree – II"in Kalimpong. I convey my greetings and good wishes to all the delegates at this seminar.

Rotarians throughout the world are embarking upon service projects to better the lives of individuals who have not been as fortunate as them. This truly exemplifies the spirit of Rotary.

Peacefulness is an inner sense of calm - it comes from becoming still – in order to reflect and meditate on our inner wisdom and receive answers. A peaceful heart is one that is free from worry and trouble.

By becoming quiet we can look at things quietly so we can more clearly understand them and thus come up with creative solutions. It is learning to live in the present.

Eleanor Roosevelt said "It isn't enough to talk about peace, one must believe it. And it isn't enough to believe in it, one must work for it".

I compliment District Governor Swapan K. Choudhury for undertaking this initiative. I wish the event all success.

Y.P. Das
Rotary International Director (2011-13)

M E S S A G E

'The real and lasting victories are those of peace,
and not of war.'

My hearty compliments to District 3240 for hosting this wonderful Seminar on Inter Country Peace Seminar – MAITREE II. In the times that we are living in, the biggest threat facing mankind is the absence of Peace and understanding in our world. Mahatma Gandhi rightly said that an eye for an eye will make the whole world blind. This world is still paying for the devastation that the two World Wars and countless battles have caused.

Peace and Conflict Resolution is one of the priority areas for the Rotary Foundation, and I am hopeful that District 3240 will be leading the way for progress in this area for the Foundation.

All my best to the Rotary Clubs, members and guests participating in this important Seminar. Please remember, our world has benefitted from leaders that have paved the way for Peace and Understanding between cultures, civilizations and races. As the American Poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said, 'lasting victories are those of Peace, and not of war', I congratulate you all for your effort in giving Rotary's 'Peace and Conflict Resolution' mission the importance that it deserves.

Warm wishes,
PDG Deepak Kapur
Chairman, Rotary's India National PolioPlus Committee

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
DIST. 3240, INDIA

Swapan K Choudhury
District Governor

To 17th February, 2015
The Chairman
MAITREE II – Inter Country Peace & Friendship Seminar
Host Club : Rotary Club of Kalimpong, RID 3240.

Dear Chairman,

Greetings from the Silver Jubilee District Secretariat.

I am proud that Rotary Club of Kalimpong – a very dynamic Club of our District, is hosting MAITREE-II, INTERCOUNTRY PEACE & FRIENDSHIP SEMINAR, at the hill top of Kalimpong. I know that under your able leadership it is going to be a great Seminar.

In Rotary we say: Peace is the key ingredient to Happiness.
Learn Peace - Teach Peace - Share Peace!
Be the change you wish to see in the world.
A change in perception leads to a change in attitude, which leads to a change in behavior which leads to a change in the world".

Keeping these words in mind, I am sure, this INTERCOUNTRY PEACE & FRIENDSHIP SEMINAR will help bring PEACE amongst Rotarians attending this Seminar from different parts of SAARC countries to make the world a better place to live in.

I will end up with the saying "When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace."

Sincerely yours
for RI Dist. 3240

Swapan Choudhury

(Swapan K Choudhury)
District Governor

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Inter Country Peace & Friendship Seminar
Rotary International District 3240
Host: Rotary Club of Kalimpong

Kalimpong, 20 February 2015

It gives me great pleasure to extend a very warm and hearty welcome to all delegates and participants to Maitree II.

The purpose of MAITREE-II, Inter Country Peace & Friendship Seminar is to promote peace and understanding through interaction and opportunity for service in our region of South Asia and neighboring countries in consonance with Rotary's goal of global peace, goodwill and removal of strife.

I hope all participants will have a pleasant sojourn and memorable experience.

Prakash Gupta
Chair: Maitree II
Inter Country Peace & Friendship Seminar

MAITREE-11, Committee Plan

	Chairperson		Prakash Gupta	
	Secretaries		G.M.Pradhan & Sanjay Bajla	
	Advisors		PDGs Dr Salil Dutta, Uday Mani Pradhan, Subir Roy	
	Sub-Committees		**Chair**	**Members:** **(Sub-committee member names listed in alphabetical order)**
1	Registration, Transport Accomodation	The RAT Committee	**Tim Macdonald**	A.K.Zimba, A.N.Sood, G.M.Pradhan, H.P. Adhikari, Kamal Bajla, Prakash Gupta, Rajat Dalmia, Sanjogita Subba, Sharda Mukhia, Sumit Jindal, Y Tash, Catherine Pradhan Lobo (added on 29-10-2014)
2	Publicity, Mementos Souvenirs	The PMS Committee	**Pravakar Dewan**	Anukampa Subba, Bibeth Sharma, G.M.Pradhan, Karma T Sherpa, , Rajen Raghavan, Rakesh Sinhal, Tapan Pradhan, Vishal Chettri,
3	Finance		**Vikash Golyan Jr**	Mahendra Agarwal, Mukesh Changia, Sanjay Bajla, Sumit Jindal.
4	Programmes		**Bharat M Pradhan**	Andrew Lal, Anukampa Subba, Bibeth Sharma,
5	Cultural Program Fellowship & Hospitality	The CFH Committee	**Miku Foning**	Catherine Lobo, Kamal Bajla, Mukesh Changia , Navin Soni, Pravin Pradhan, Sanjogita Subba, Sudha Agarwal, Vikash Kejriwal ,
6	Prep of Venue		**Sanjay Bajla**	Deo Pandey, Rajat Kejriwal, Sanjary Das ,Tim Macdonald,
7	Catering		**Vikash Golyan Sr**	Indira Bose, Sumit Jindal, Vikash Golyan Jr, Sanjay Das

Emergence of Rotary Club in Kalimpong

Charter President Rtn. Brig. N.K. Gurung, VSM (Retd)

Consequent to a proposal tabled by the Rotary Club of Darjeeling to raise a Club in Kalimpong, a core group was formed on 9 October 92. The first organisational meeting was chaired by Rtn Lee Kumar Pradhan, Special Representative of the District Governor. The Core Group comprised of Brig. N.K. Gurung, Ganesh Mani Pradhan, M. Foning, Udai Chandra Pradhan and Bharat Mani Pradhan. The core group was given the task of inducting twentyfive members and forwarding the charter application together with the fees as early as possible. The emphasis was on the word 'early'. At the outset it looked to be a simple task. However, very soon it became apparent that the task was somewhat difficult if not entirely onerous. When the membership induction campaign was launched, it became amply clear to us that the time taken to form the Club would be more than what we had bargained for.

We had set December 92 to accomplish the task, but as it turned out, we were being ambitious. The induction process was slow because of the exacting qualitative requirements expected of the members. Classification was yet another bugbear. By end December we were a motley group of only fifteen members.

A fresh campaign of recruitment was launched in January 93. Lawyers, consulting engineers, agriculturists, bankers, persons connected with citrus fruit research, retailers, tourism promoters, communication experts, income tax consultants and many other professionals were invited to attend a series of meetings. Rotary ideals were explained and the message on the need of serving the community was conveyed. However, despite the best of our efforts it was disheartening to see many prospective and suitable candidates sitting on the fence for a long time, indicisive as it were, whether to jump forward into our fold or to take a step away from us. When the suspense became overbearing we had no choice but to discount induction of such persons who could not make up their minds. We consoled ourselves with the adage that a fickle minded person cannot make a good leader and hence a good rotarian.

Our search continued. It was a slow and painstaking process, at times even frustrating. But our conviction grew stronger that time spent on selecting good rotarians would not be a waste. By end January 93 we were still short of the magic number of twentyfive members.

Between December 1992 and 17 January 1993 the Sponsor Club conducted two meetings. The District Governor's representative and a few members of Darjeeling Club were present on two other occasions. We are ever grateful for their valued advice and suggestions. Such joint organisational meetings were very fruitful. By this time we were fully functional as a provisional Club. We met every Sunday at 3 pm at the Kalimpong Park Hotel Conference room.

Search for suitable members continued with renewed vigour. In hind sight it may be pertinent to mention that it is comparatively easier for an established Rotary Club to induct members in their normal membership development programme than a provisional club to gather candidates to form the mandatory charter group. An old club has time and resources but a new club in its formative stage, besides having to contend with the deadline has meagre or no resource at its disposal. However, slowly but surely

the membership grew. At the cost of repetition to the old members, objects of Rotary, importance of community and vocational service, salient points on classification were repeated in every meeting as such meetings were invariably attended by prospective candidates. Question time was specially set aside for their benefit to clarify doubts. One question by a prospective member merits mention here. The candidate wished to know if he had the option of resigning whenever he desired to do so. The answer given was how could he think of leaving when he had not even arrived! The candidate stayed to become a member!! Such cajoling, albeit in lighter vein and constant motivating, paid good dividends. During first week of March 93, after four months of intense efforts, with great jubilation and fanfare, we welcomed our twentyfifth member. At long last the avenue was clear for our charter application to be submitted to Rotary International!

We started putting together various documents which we were required to submit to Rotary International through our Sponsor Club, the District Governor and South Asia Office. On behest of Rtn Dr Salil Datta, the District Governor, we sent all documents to him in draft form for his perusal to ensure that there were no errors in our application. On receipt of the application back from Rtn Salil, when we were carrying out a detail check of all the documents, we received the good news that he, Rtn Jiwan Kumar Pradhan and two senior rotarians from Siliguri would be visiting Kalimpong on 14 March 93. It was a good get together in which ten rotarians from Darjeeling Sponsor Club including Rtn Lee Kumar Pradhan, the Governor's Special Representative and a few guests were present. We counted our blessing for the visit, for, we were able to clarify many doubts pertaining to our application and we had the opportunity to seek valuable guidance from the District Governor. Our Charter application was forwarded to the Sponsor Club, Darjeeling on 26 March 93 and the District Governor submitted the same to South Asia Office on 30 March 93. It was apparent that Rotary Secretariates at all levels took prompt action. On 20 April 93, within a record time of twentyone days Rotary Rotary Club of Kalimpong was admitted to Rotary International.

This was history. Looking back over the past few months, we consider ourselves lucky to have been associated with the raising of the Club. As charter members, our experience had been unique. It took us four months to induct twentyfive charter members, and in the process we had our moments of trials and tribulations, success and failure, humour and sorrow. In the noble effort of introducing Rotary in Kalimpong, all the charter members applied themselves assiduously towards various facets of rotary activities during the raising. This should stand us in good stead in our future programmes. Our actual tasks commence now. We are confident that the present group of members and the future rotarians who will follow will always strive hard to blaze a trail of glory in the path of Rotary ideals.■

This article appeared in the Souvenir on the Charter Presentation Day of Rotary Club of Kalimpong on 20th. April, 1993.

My Journey with Rotary International

Luish Aind

Things have their uncanny ways to occur in one's life. My journey with Rotary International began much the same way. And what an eventful journey it has been! I believe that all of us have our own stories to tell about the way Rotary came and influenced our lives or else we wouldn't be attending Maitree-II.

Kalimpong is, therefore, destined to embellish its name in Rotary's annals as one of its most memorable chapters when its many family members, spread all across the globe, would get together for the cause of peace yet once again.

My resolve to attend the forthcoming Maitree-II (Inter Country Peace Seminar) is very personal one because Rotary, for me, is a home away from home. In the first place, I wouldn't have perhaps been invited if it wasn't for my active association with Rotary since my return from Bangkok where I had undergone a course on 'International Peace and Conflict Resolutions' in 2012. It is a responsibility, I am only honored to undertake. Therefore, being in any Rotary program, for me, is like being with family members who get together unfailingly in their line of duty to contribute more for peace in the world.

So, my journey with Rotary began somewhere in the mid 2011 when I received an official letter from my Police Head Quarters asking for willingness to undergo a course on peace and conflict resolutions sponsored by Rotary. I wasted no time, got in touch with Rotary Club of Guwahati, RID 3240 and fortunately got selected after a long and strenuous selection process.

The reason I decided to undergo this Professional Development Certificate Program, generally known as Peace Education, is primarily because I had felt very inadequate in terms of peace-building and problem solving when I was faced with violent ethnic clashes in the district where I was serving as the Superintendent of Police in 2011. In it, therefore, I saw once in a lifetime opportunity to equip myself up in more ways than regular policing alone.

As a police officer, my job primarily is conflict resolution but the irony is that the majority of us public servants tend to be unaware of the fine dividing line between doing good and doing harm in a conflict situation. It is kind of pedagogic to say that but I believe, formal education is rightly so to great extent. Therefore, it is important to have a basic understanding of the subject matter in order that one becomes culturally competent and better equipped to do more for peace using **various conflict resolution skills, approaches and strategies for building a sustainable peace.**

But what is Peace Education?

Johan Galtung opines that "A major focus of ***peace education*** is to enable and empower people to handle conflicts more creatively and less violently."

However, the goal is not more books, but more ***peace***. Peace education is only meaningful if it leads to action. The objective, therefore, is to facilitate a broad understanding of the topic and to explore creative ways of resolving conflicts in our daily lives.

The most meaningful definition for me, however, is the one which describes peace education as the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behavior to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the environment.

Peace and conflict can mean different things to different people. We all have an understanding of both peace and conflict it in our own ways.

However, in the conflict resolution field, peace has also been categorized into two types: *Positive Peace and Negative Peace*. 'Negative Peace' means the end of direct violence and 'positive peace' means both the end of direct violence and the "overcoming of structural and cultural violence.

Again, Conflict can be described as "an *expressed struggle* between at least two *interdependent parties* who **perceive** *incompatible goals*, *scarce resources*, and *interference* from others in achieving their goals".

Most peace researchers agree that, whereas; violence can and should be avoided and overcome, conflict is a part of human development and can be channeled into positive directions. The thrust is to prevent conflict from deteriorating and becoming violent.

Theory apart, I believe, what is important is whether one has anything to show for on ground for all the education Rotary gives to peace scholars. Frankly, I feel very humbled every time I get a call, and most times from Rotarians I do not know, at least till then, to play my role on the Rotary stage. And every time I receive the call, it is as if I already know the caller. In short, Rotary makes me feel wanted. Even as I am writing down my limited experience with Rotary as called to do so by Rotarian Prakash Gupta, Chairman, Maitree-II, I only feel much obliged.

I feel ill at ease to blow my own trumpet to highlight my involvement with Rotary since my return from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok in 2012. Nevertheless, I wish do so with the sole intention that more peace scholars participate in peace works as peace theoreticians, peace practitioners and peace researchers. After all, Rotary has spent much resource on our education both in terms of Professional Development Certificate Program and the Master's Degree in various famed Universities of the world.

I trust that Rotary would be happy to know that in me it has found a humble

peace soldier. It is a responsibility I gladly undertake. In this context, I am constrained to state that it is an honor to have been-

1) Speaker at Zonal Seminar in Bongaigaon in 2012,

2) Member of Peace Fellow Selection Board since 2013,

3) Trainer at Orientation Training Program on Peace and conflict resolution in collaboration with Dibrugarh district administration and UNICEF in 2014,

4) Speaker at 'Aikatan' at Swabhumi, Kolkata for RID 3291 in 2014,

5) Speaker at 'Maitree' Inter Country Meet at Bolpur, Shantiniketan in 2014,

6) Resource person at RYLA at RRTC, Meghalaya in 2014 ,

7) Speaker at TRF seminar in Guwahati, RID 3240 in 2014,

8) Founder of a Coaching School for the underprivileged children of my native village since 2013,

9) Appreciated for my Recommendation on Assam-Nagaland inter-state border conflict Resolution.

10)Selected to participate in Breakout Sessions in Rotary Peace Symposium to be held in Sao Paulo, Brazil in June, 2015.

I am very sure that all these couldn't have been possible without Rotary. I feel myself being led by some power beyond my comprehension through the guiding arms of Rotary. That is the reason why in my starting sentence I spoke of uncanny ways. At the end of the day, what matters to me is that Rotary has a purpose cut out for me which could well be my life purpose.

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Luish Aind is an IPS officer and is presently based in Guwahati. Apart from being a winner of President's Medal for Meritorious Service and Chief Minister's Medal for Outstanding Professional Competence, Luish is a Rotary Peace Scholar. He has been invited to be a speaker in the 2015 Rotary Peace Symposium in Sao Paolo.

"The Rotary Foundation is not to build monuments of brick and stone. If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work on brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal minds, if we imbue them with the full meaning of the spirit of Rotary as expressed in our Objects and with the just fear of God and love of our fellowmen, we are engraving on those tablets something that will brighten all eternity."

RI President Arch Klumph. (Rotary Year 1916-1917)

East South Asia

Rtn. PP Sujeev Shakya

A more integrated East South Asia can pave the way for the region's economic transformation

KATHMANDU, FEB 17 - In Delhi, the media has an eye on the Northeast and any event there has the potential to interest and constitute the breaking news. It seems as though people are just learning to understand a region that had previously seemed so alien.

India's federal structure and the concentration of power in Delhi since independence has left the country being identified perhaps more with northern South Asia. Back when illiteracy loomed and knowledge of far-off places was not easily accessible through the internet as it is today, it was obvious for the size of eyes and skin colour to be the differentiators. But today, when knowledge about different people and places is easily attainable, it is sad to see the way a whole region of over 45 million people is viewed.

Assamese, Bodo, Manipuri and Nepali are among the 22 languages recognised in the Indian Sixth Schedule. However, it seems the discourse concerning the Northeast needs a thorough re-evaluation and that only economic transformation can bring such regions to the mainstream. Goa, another state in India, with less than two million people, attracts attention from over the world as tourism has brought it economic transformation. It is time to rethink the economic potential of the Himalayan region, starting from Uttarakhand to the Northeast states, through North Bengal and Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan right up to Myanmar—a new economic bloc where activities blur political boundaries.

Similarities and differences

The Himalayan region has an economy that is more subsistence oriented and spending patterns are completely different here than in the flatlands. You can easily spot a hill driver amongst the many cab drivers and a store associate from many others. There is a culture of the importance of the self, be it in how one looks or how one wants to be seen. So brand managers seem to have gotten their strategies utterly wrong, when they equated the Kathmandu market with bazaars in Lucknow or Patna in terms of products and therefore, want sales managers from those regions to service the Nepal market. But these markets are not comparable. For instance, consumers in Nepal and many young people in the Northeast emulate Korean fashion rather than Bollywood. The products they demand are thus entirely different.

Furthermore, the buying behaviour of consumers is very different. People

will pay more for better packaging without even comparing the content, which explains why confectionery and biscuit aisles in supermarkets are cluttered with nicely packaged products from Malaysia or Thailand. The way instant noodles has almost become a way of life in the entire region also shows how consumption patterns are different. Nepal, with its opening up to international tourists in the 1960s, brought in the café culture and international cuisine, making Kathmandu the cosmopolitan heart of South Asia.

The potential for Nepali businesses to expand their market to other parts of East South Asia is tremendous. Similarly, there are opportunities for areas that have developed different competencies in particular sectors.

Hydro, agriculture, tourism and service. The major potentials of this area are similar and have been talked about for ages. The region's great bio-diversity makes it unique and with advances in transportation and communication shrinking divides, its potentials make more commercial sense than ever.

The distance from Kathmandu to Guwahati is just over 1,000 kilometres, the same distance as from Kathmandu to Delhi. Furthermore, Guwahati is closer to Yangon than Delhi. As road and rail infrastructure improve, it will become easier to move people and products across the region. Tourism continues to be the biggest potential as there are so many unexplored areas and with a semblance of political stability, more people will start to travel to this region.

The service industry is the hallmark of the region, with people under 25 forming half of the population. These people like to leave their homes in search of jobs across the world. One hotel management school in Kalimpong, India has the bulk of its students coming from Bhutan. Students across the Northeast will be more than happy to come and learn luxury selling if institutes imparting courses on the same open up in Nepal. After all, brands seem to be in the DNA of the people in the region as there is more acceptability of brands. For instance, it does not take much time to adapt to selling Louis Vuitton bags. There is also great potential for liberal arts schools and design centres to be established as creativity reigns in the minds of the people going in for left-brain professions such as medicine, engineering or accounting. The common themes to the region are endless.

Myanmar and China

The importance of the region has only increased with Myanmar, the world's 24th most populous country with a market of over 60 million people, opening up to the outside world. China is already making inroads into Myanmar through which it will, connect with India and Bangladesh. Myanmar will help to connect China's economic laggard Kunming aka India's Northeast with the far-off areas of economic boom. Many

suggest Myanmar will ape the Chinese way of growth. But it is also felt that the influence of India during the early parts of the 20th century and a culture moulded around the erstwhile India would cause the Burmese to look for intellectual freedom, cultural renaissance and a stable democracy in the long run; something different from the way China is moving.

Inter-linked region

People in Nepal and Northeast India are better poised to understand the Myanmar market and bring in networks to make many businesses, especially in the service sector, work. The diaspora from these regions currently in Myanmar will be more than happy to link up with businesspeople from the regions they belonged to.

With the Indian federal elections around the corner, all parties have realised that they have ignored Northeast India for far too long. They will want to rearticulate the discourse. As the roots of democracy get stronger in Nepal, as indicated by the recent peaceful elections (when compared with the chaos in Bangladesh and Thailand), economic growth will be the focus. The internet and communication technologies are already making political boundaries less relevant. History provides us with lessons on how suddenly an economic region can emerge; they are never planned, it just happens. Perhaps the positive transformation of East Southasia is on the anvil.

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"Peace, Progress and Prosperity Through Tourism"

Rtn. P.K.Dong,
Tourism Consultant

When we look at the international tourism scenario we find that almost all countries in the world, including communist countries like China and North Korea have recognized the socio-economic importance of tourism. As a result, UN has set up a separate organ called UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to look after the interest of tourism.

It is seen that countries that have robust tourism sector have high GDP, high HDI (Human Development Index) and good, if not excellent, infrastructure like roads, airports, railways, water supply, electricity supply, civic amenities, etc.

In 2011 the top ten countries in terms of international tourists arrivals were:

Rank	Country	Tourist arrivals (***in millions***)
1.	France	81.4
2.	USA	62.7
3.	China (Main)	57.6
4.	Spain	56.7
5.	Italy	46.1
6.	Turkey	29.3
7.	United Kingdom	29.3
8.	Germany	28.4
9.	Malaysia	24.7
10.	Mexico	23.4
38	India	6.3

It can be said that tourism has also contributed towards the progress and prosperity of these countries to a great extent.

Although India is placed 38th in rank in terms of international tourist arrivals, its position is much better when considered in terms of tourism receipts. India's position is 17th by earning USD 17.5 billion in terms of tourism receipts. That is, the story of tourism begins with the number of tourists but does not end there. We need to consider other aspects also, such as, tourist length of stay, per head expenditure, purpose of visit, their experience in the destination, and so on.

In India, the Top Ten States in terms of foreign tourist arrivals are:'

Rank	Name	Traffic (***in Lakhs***)
1	Maharashtra	48.15
2	Tamil Nadu	33.73
3	Delhi	21.60
4	Uttar Pradesh	18.87
5	Rajasthan	13.51
6	West Bengal	12.13
7	Bihar	9.72
8	Kerala	7.32
9	Karnataka	5.74
10	Himachal Pradesh	4.84

The Top Ten destinations in India in terms of domestic tourists visit are:

Rank	Name	Traffic (***in Crores***)
1	Uttar Pradesh	15.54
2	Andhra Pradesh	15.31
3	Tamil Nadu	13.75
4	Karnataka	8.41
5	Maharashtra	5.53
6	Madhya Pradesh	4.41
7	Rajasthan	2.71
8	Uttarkhand	2.59
9	West Bengal	2.22
10	Gujarat	2.10

Here also, the big players are those who have pilgrim centres, cultural attractions and interesting tourist activities.

As per a survey conducted by a European research institute, tourists are attracted towards a destination if it has certain attributes. The survey revealed that among the important attributes, tourists consider personal safety as one of the top important attributes that a destination should be able to provide to visitors.

Tourism and peace are interrelated and interdependent

In the first week of November2014, I was in Bodoland, when an Assamese gentleman asked me why more tourists are going to Sikkim and not much to Assam. I told him that when we look at the tourist brochures of any country or State, they all crow that theirs is the most fascinating country or State in the world. Sikkim too claims to possess certain unique attractions but the most important USP of Sikkim is – it is a Peaceful State. Yes, without peace we cannot have an enduring tourism.

Take the recent case of Thailand. We may recall the mass protest by the people of Bangkok against the ruling government of that time in summer 2014. It continued for almost a month or so. As a result, there was a substantial fall in tourist arrivals in Thailand; if I remember correctly, it was more than 25% decline, which was threatening to cause economic crisis, and ultimately the military intervened and averted an impending economic crisis. As soon as the peace was restored, tourists have again started descending on Thailand. And now the business is as usual in Thailand. Thanks to Tourism. Thanks to Peace.

Therefore countries whose leaders understand the role of tourism in bringing socio-economic benefits, including peace, in their countries encourage development and promotion of tourism by giving various incentives like financial, political and administrative support.

Tourism, if properly planned, organized, and managed, can bring understanding, appreciation, prosperity, and better life to all who are involved. Whenever and wherever visitor and host meet and greet each other with mutual appreciation, respect, friendship, then we can say a movement toward peace has begun.

I have heard many times leaders of North East India claiming boldly in various platforms that North East India is much safer than Delhi or Mumbai. It may be true, rather it is true to some extent, but what is important for the local tourism industry is to know what the perception of the market about North

East is. Do the markets really think it is safe to travel in North East? What is the image of North East in the market? What is the awareness level of market about North East?

In my opinion, we need to do a lot of marketing activities to create awareness, proactive communication and image building exercise to make the market perceive that North East is not only attractive but it is also as safe as any other part of India.

Of course, the best way to convince people about the positive attributes of a destination is to get tourists, media and tour operators to visit the destination and send them back happy, convinced that they got the value for their money and time invested in the destination. That means, we need to have highly trained and motivated professional people in tourism industry.

How can tourism contribute to peace?

If understanding and increased appreciation for other people's way of life, mores, culture and language make us a part of a world community, then the answer must be yes. This is specially so even if only a casual acquaintance is made with residents of the host country, because this opens communication, and communication is the most important to improve understanding and relationship.

One point I keep emphasizing to tourism planners is that any place that wishes to become a successful tourist destination must have more tourist activities than just the traditional recreational activities such as lying on the beach or patronizing a nightclub or visiting popular tourist attractions.

For example, in Denmark there is a concept of **"life seeing tourism"**. In this programme, the plan is usually set upon half-day basis, with the visitor spending afternoons visiting tourist highlights, shopping and pursuing other traditional recreational activities. The morning would be devoted to visiting organizations, establishments or individuals with programme planned by a special expert guide. For example, doctors may like to visit another local doctors and discuss about the health problems of local residents, or a war veteran may like to visit a local war veteran and discuss their experiences, or a Rotarian may like to visit a local Rotarian of his classification or one who pursues his interest or hobby, or sportsmen may like to have a cup of tea with players like Merry Kom, Bhaichung Bhutia, Sunil Chettri, Sunil Pradhan and have a photo opportunity. The examples given are just indicative and the programme can be expanded endlessly by the tour operators and local guides.

This programme is also known as "people-to-people" program.

Understanding the close linkage between Peace and Tourism, an institute called International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT) was founded in 1986 by people interested in tourism as well as peace.

The International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering and facilitating tourism initiatives that

contribute to international understanding and cooperation, an improved quality of environment, the preservation of heritage and through these initiatives, helping to bring about a peaceful and sustainable world. It is based on a vision of the world's largest industry, travel and tourism, becoming the worlds' first global peace industry on the belief that every traveler is potentially an "Ambassador for Peace." Visit the IIPT website at http://www.iipt.org
It has recently opened a chapter in India also.

IIPT is undertaking several projects to inspire peace through tourism. Some of the ongoing projects are: IIPT Global Peace Parkspeace_park are formed throughout the world to dedicate a piece of land to their commitment to "Building a Culture of Peace." Their goal is to circle the earth with over 2,010 IIPT Peace Parks

The Credo of the Peaceful Traveler puts forth an ethical travel philosophy for travelers to abide by.

World Peace Travel is a new IIPT endeavor, beginning in 2006, which offers tours to various destinations around the world. This initiative was launched as means of offering travel opportunities that promote a 'Culture of Peace through Tourism.' I would say, Bhutanese tour operators are indeed smart tour operators; they were the first ones to launch Peace Tour to the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan in 2007.

Thus, tourism is an important vehicle for propagating and creating an environment for peace and encouraging communication and understanding among the various countries of the world.

***Rtn P K Dong**, a member and PP of RC Gangtok South, is a tourism consultant by profession. While in Government of India service, he served in New Delhi Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia as Director and Frankfurt, Germany, as Regional Director of Europe. After his retirement, he joined Sikkim Tourism as Executive Director and subsequently as CEO-cum-Managing Director of STDC. He is often invited as a guest speaker in various platforms to speak on diverse subjects like tourism, North East India and senior citizens.*

"One of the most impressive examples I know of international cooperation is in those gardens where we find plants, shrubs, and trees flourishing side by side in perfect harmony and beauty. There is much wisdom to be learned in a garden, and the very beginning is a realization of the fact that all final results depend upon proper preparation of the soil. So it is with Rotary. The crop we envisage is world peace and stability, a world in which we all live together as friends and neighbors. The seed to be sown- fellowship, friendship, understanding. The soil - the minds of individual Rotarians."

RI President Harold T. Thomas (Rotary Year1959-60),

FEBRUARY – World Understanding Month and its importance in promoting World Peace, Understanding and Friendship

PDG Udaya Mani Pradhan

"The way to WAR is a well-paved highway, and the way to PEACE is still a wilderness."
– Paul P. Harris

On a cold wintry Chicago evening of 23rd February 1905, Paul Percival Harris along with three other friends met at Room 711 of Unity Building. Paul Harris proposed that they form a club, and the rest, as we all know, became history. This was the first Rotary Club meeting. To commemorate the anniversary of the first Rotary meeting, this day is now celebrated throughout the Rotary world as the 'World Understanding and Peace' day. Ever since, Rotarians have spread the message of World Understanding through acts of kindness, compassion, friendship as embodied in Rotary's motto 'Service Above Self'.

Today, Rotary's mission statement, amongst other things, incorporates advancement of World Understanding and Peace through a fellowship of business, professional and community leaders. With a motive of actualizing this vision, February has been designated as 'World Understanding Month' and we Rotarians have been given an opportunity to volunteer our time, effort and money to further our peacemaking activity so that we may live out our commitment towards a better world.

The second week of February is observed as 'Family Week' with the emphasis to connect with families in communities especially those needing extra attention. Rotarians are directed to address challenges facing today's families such as domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, drug and alcohol abuse and clubs are urged to undertake family projects.

It is often said that 'Absence of War is not Peace'. With disparity in socio-economic conditions continuously widening, islands of prosperity continue to grow in an ocean of poverty, and as long as this imbalance exists, the world will be plagued with turmoil and strife. One fifth of world's population enjoys 80 percent of its resources, while majority toil away, barely surviving on less than a dollar a day. People in developing countries still live without access to clean drinking water, education, good health and other basic amenities of life. Upliftment of the vulnerable sections of society is critical to establishing world peace.

Rotary has endeavoured to break down the barrier that cause people to be in a state of conflict with one another. By trying to understand people's point of view and reaching across lines of race, religion and culture to become partners in service to all mankind, tensions are reduced and friendships enhanced. The seeds of conflict have predominantly been hunger, sickness, illiteracy and

economic deprivation and Rotary's answer to these ailments has been Humanitarian Aid. Therein lies the most vital ingredient of Peace.

Rotary through the actions of the Rotary Foundation has been constantly engaged in addressing the above concerns through its multifarious projects and activities. Rotarians dreamt of a Polio free world in the early 1980s and today, we are on the verge of actualizing this dream, a telling example of World Understanding.

The search for World Understanding and Peace has been the focus of Rotary since its inception. In 1921, at the Edinburgh Convention, Rotarians incorporated peacemaking into Rotary's Constitution and Bylaws. Ten years later, the first international peace park was the culmination of the goodwill meeting of Rotarians from United States and Canada. In the 1930s, Rotarians in Europe promoted the concept of International Understanding through exchange club visits. In 1940, Rotarians adopted a resolution calling for 'freedom, justice, truth, sanctity of the pledged word, and respect for human rights' at the Havana, Convention at Cuba. This became the framework for the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1942, British Rotarians convened a conference to plan a world at peace. The conference led to the formation of UNESCO in 1946. Rotary's biggest moment came when 49 Rotary members served in 29 delegations to the United Nation's Charter Conference. Today, RI's representatives to the UN host an annual Rotary Day at the UN to celebrate this partnership for peace.

Rotary's international meetings too, such as the International Convention, International Assembly and Goodwill meets foster the spirit of International Understanding where Rotarians from various parts of the globe meet to celebrated Service and Fellowship.

Many Rotary International and Rotary Foundation programmes are designed to promote understanding among peoples of different countries and cultures. Since 1947, Ambassadorial scholars have spread the message of goodwill throughout the world. The Ambassadorial scholarship programme is the world's largest privately funded international scholarship programme for university studies. Its purpose is to promote further international understanding and friendly relations between peoples of all nations.

In 1965, the Group Study Exchange programme was born with an objective of bringing the countries of the world closer through understanding. The Group Study Exchange programme has since become one of the most popular and successful programmes of the Rotary Foundation. It helps people from different countries understand one another better. The GSE is a vital instrument in Rotary's commitment to World Understanding and Peace.

In 1974, the Youth Exchange became an official Rotary International programme. This has long been one of Rotary's most active and enduring programmes. Thousands of young adults have befriended citizens and learned cultures of people of another country. These exchanges develop a mutual understanding across national boundaries – they build friendships – a prerequisite for a peaceful world.

In 2002, the Rotary Foundation

launched the Rotary Centre for International Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution. A centre was established at seven reputed universities in Argentina, Australia, England, France, Japan, Sweden and the United States. Thailand opened its doors for a short term programme in peace and conflict prevention and resolution. The Centres admitted the first class of 70 students committed to careers in peacemaking and conflict resolution. This led Elise Fiber Smith, President, Women's Edge and a former Rotary Ambassadorial scholar to remark, "the establishment of Rotary Centres for International Studies is one of the most meaningful and innovative initiatives of the Rotary Foundation in the new millennium. I am convinced that preparing new leadership in global peace and problem solving is one of the most critical needs of the 21st century." In just over a decade, the Rotary Peace Centers have trained more than 900 fellows for careers in peace building.

February is the month to rededicate and reinforce our commitment to the vision of our founding fathers. This is possible by creating awareness on the vast possibilities that lie before us, and then taking appropriate action. In designating February as the World Understanding month, the RI Board urges all Rotary Clubs to plan programmes for their weekly meetings and undertake special activities to emphasize "Understanding and Goodwill as essential for World Peace". Clubs are advised to observe this very special month by inviting international speakers, Youth Exchange and International scholars, feature GSE team members, arrange discussions on International affairs and issues, present entertainment showcasing international cultural or artistic themes, schedule programmes with international emphasis or even host inter-country seminars. Many clubs launch an international community service initiative. Start a Rotary fellowship exchange or just support the Rotary Foundation programmes.

World Understanding month is a chance for every Rotarian through their respective Rotary Clubs to pause, plan and promote the Fourth Avenue of Service, and further Rotary's quest for goodwill, peace and understanding.

Three Past Rotary International Presidents have woven their themes around Peace. In 1982-83, President Stan McCaffrey gave Rotary the theme "World Understanding and Peace through Rotary". In 1987-88, President Chuck Keller had as his theme "United in Service, Dedicated to Peace" and in 1995-96, President Herb Brown said "Act with Integrity, Service with Love, Work for Peace". Paul Harris believed that the path to peace was walked one step at a time, one person at a time. One hundred and ten years after Paul Harris founded Rotary, there is, of course, conflict in the world – but the onus is on us, Rotarians, to further the cause of World Understanding, in mankind's quest for lasting peace.

Rtn. Udaya Mani Pradhan *joined the Rotary Club of Darjeeling in 1983. He served as President of the Club in 1987-88 & 1988-89. He led the GSE team to Brazil in 1995-96 and thereafter, served the District as Governor in 2000-2001. He was District Trainer in 2009-10 and 2012-13 and DLCC in 2014. He is a Paul Harris Fellow.*

Group Study Exchange and International Peace

Rtn. Bibeth Sharma

A great man he was – He who framed this quote *"We Kill each other because he hate each other, we hate each other because we do not know each other"*. I was very impressed with this quote ever since I started reading books in the school library. I used this exact quote during my Interview for GSE selection held at Siliguri on November 2008. The selectors were very impressed as they knew that my curiosity to know the Americans was there and I made it pretty sure that I was going to Florida not just for fun but to know the Americans from a real perspective which differed from the discernment we normally construct based on TV Dramas and Hollywood films.

I made it to the GSE team to Florida, R.I.District 6980 and I knew my life would change and it surely did. America is not a land of fantasy but a country made by hardworking tax payers who value time like God.

We reached Orlando on 18th April, 2009 at 10.30 PM local time and there were many Rotarians from the District 6980 including the District Governor, Carlos Giraldo and District GSE chairman, Clark Gwinn waiting to welcome us at the airport. The flight was 3 hours late but still they were waiting for us because they were waiting for friends who had travelled 12000 miles to be with them for the next 1 month.

I thought being with strangers for a month would be difficult but 1 month flew faster than a supersonic Concorde plane. I am not exaggerating! 1 month was too less a time but it became the *"Time of my life"*. America is not what Hollywood portrays nor a land of fantasy. It is a country where "*hard work makes love with talents and give birth to success"*.

It's true that the Americans know very less about the rest of the world but with exchange programmes like GSE, they get to know much more about other countries. India was a county of *Slumdog* to my hosts but it was about to change forever as I was going to live with them. All my hosts were hosting an Indian for the first time. They still write to me now and they thank me for making them understand the Indian Culture. I became a Rotarian after my GSE trip because I was very impressed with Rotary's idea of spreading peace and harmony around the world. I can proudly say that I have around 30 American friends who are peace lovers and have deep respect for citizens of foreign lands.

In our Itinerary, there was a place called The Villages where we would stay for 4 days. We were shocked to see the Villagers, the inhabitants of The Villages. They were old but young-at-heart people who were enjoying their best days, probably their last days together with people of similar age. The Rotary Club of Villages met in the morning and I met the oldest member who was above 90 years and when asked what made him join Rotary, he replied "*Rotary brings the world together. It's a*

funny Organization". Six years down the line, these words still reverberate in my ears as if it was said a moment ago. I could see many of them were eager to know about India. Sadly, the presentation was just for 15 minutes.
My GSE trip was a very successful one as I had the opportunity to tell them about our diverse culture and could learn about their culture. In one instances I was asked the significance of our greeting *Namaste to* which I explained in this manner – "We meet so many people in a day, if we start hugging each one of them, we will surely transfer diseases. So we resort to Namaste". They were very impressed and to add to its genuineness, I sighted the example of then widespread flu – The Swine flu which could be avoided by *Namaste*.

GSE broaden my perspective of the West. I knew about America but knew nothing about the Americans before my trip, I came to know about their hardship, their struggle and most importantly their perception about family. It is exactly like ours.

Yes, it is true that 30 days of GSE is not enough to understand everything but it can help you build an understanding of each other's perception and the reason for such belief. If we understand each other, there will be no fight. There will be only peace. GSE made me a very confident person and I owe a lot to The Rotary Foundation and my host club, Rotary Club of Kalimpong for giving me this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Bibeth Sharma is a member of R.C. Kalimpong and was a member of the GSE team from RI District 3240 that toured District 6980 in U.S.A in 2009.

THE FOUR-WAY TEST

The Four-Way Test is a nonpartisan and nonsectarian ethical guide for Rotarians to use for their personal and professional relationships. The test has been translated into more than 100 languages, and Rotarians recite it at club meetings:

Of the things we think, say or do

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Does Rotary have a role in the 'Home of Seven Sisters'?

Northeast---the land of elusive peace

PDG Manas Chaudhuri

The Northeastern corner of India draws media attention, as it were, for all the wrong reasons. Every time the rest of the country hears about the Region is probably because of ethnic conflagration, insurgency or bloody political and social unrest. Thus the Northeast apparently passes off in the national psyche as an inhospitable mass of land in constant ferment posing serious challenge to India's unity and integrity. Surrounded by some unfriendly neighbours, far-flung from the mainland India, poor infrastructure owing to Centre's past inattention and low aspirations of the peoples, the Region's case has not been helped by myriad tribes and ethnic groups trying to come to terms with identity politics, battle between tradition and modernity and failure of the political system to deliver rapid economic progress. Indeed, the Northeast is more complex than an uninitiated can ever imagine.

Sixty eight years after Independence, NE is yet to find its feet despite a slew of generous steps taken by New Delhi. From a one State Region---Assam---this far-flung area today has Seven States, euphemistically called "Home of Seven Sisters". The idea was to allow the myriad peoples of the Region the right to self-governance. After 43 years of Reorganisation of Assam, the stark reality is that the "Seven Sisters" are still languishing in terms of infrastructure development and economic progress. This in spite of the fact that during the last four decades Government of India has pumped in several lakh crore rupees for the development of the States (The current annual allocation from Centre for the Northeast is Rs 15000 crore). Initially the common refrain was that the Region has received "step-motherly treatment" from the Centre. The tumultuous anti-foreigners movement in Assam in the late seventies and mid-eighties, which virtually crippled the Region for a long period of time created a perilous sense of isolation among the Northeasterners. The historic movement which is unparallel in the human history held the Government to ransom. The standoff made the Government of India sit up and decide on a new chapter on the Northeast. Among others, it was rightly decided to accord the Region a special treatment on financial allocations and other sops. For the first time, New Delhi became proactive so that the "backward" Region is helped in catching up with the rest of the country---an essential prerequisite for peace in the Region.

INHERENT COMPLEXITIES

Since the vivisection of Assam in 1972, much water has flow down the bridge. But the complexities of the Region instead of diminishing seem to have multiplied on all fronts. Poor governance, political profligacy, ethnic clashes and striking absence of smart leadership and lack of job opportunities

have added to the woes of the common man in the Region. Add to it, the frequent public agitations in the form of *bandhs*, intermittent bomb blasts and blood letting by gun wielding militants have been haunting the area. Rail link with the rest of the country which passes through the Bodo predominant areas is often blocked by agitating public for their ethnic causes. Similarly , roads to Manipur are blocked for months on owing to ethnic conflict among Nagas, Kukis and Meiteis over control of the Hills of Manipur. These bring a trail of human miseries and in their wake peace and tranquility become the first casualty.

The resultant chaos and confusion abetted by lack of political will to take a firm grip on the prevailing situation have provided a perfect recipe for law and order to collapse. The situation is tailor-made for germination of incendiarism. It is estimated that there are some 50 armed militant groups, small and big, who have been making their presence felt once in a while---all for various causes ranging from the romanticism of separating from India to making some quick bucks!

The mother of all insurgencies---the armed Naga struggle---may have fallen silent for now, but the Naga issue remains unresolved since the dawn of Independence. Protracted dialogues with Naga separatist leaders and the Government of India have failed to make headway. In the Mother State Assam, the fierce challenge posed by the deadly ULFA militants is only half resolved. And Assam's latest hot spot of violence and mayhem is the Bodo dominated areas where in recent months some 300 Adhivasis and immigrants have fallen to the bullets of Bodo insurgents who are clearly indulging in ethnic cleansing.

Complexities of the Region have compounded by the huge population boom; in the past four decades the population growth has been a phenomenal four times. Apart from the baby boomers of the miniscule tribes, inter-state migration and humungous infiltration from Bangladesh have largely contributed to this abnormal rise in population. The resultant effect is that there is a huge pressure on land, jobs and livelihood---all spoilers of peace. The picture will become grimmer if we take into account the rising identity assertions by the myriad peoples thereby throwing asunder the age-old social bonds.

The absence of sustained peace and tranquility has caused a big set back to development agenda of the Government. The absence of good roads, rail connection not to speak of fast and dependable communication system have had multiplier effect on the despondency and frustration of the common man. During the last half a century the Region has failed to break the jinx when it comes to creating a healthy socio-political climate for attracting investment for better education facilities, giving fillip to entrepreneurship and breaking the mental shackles of clutching on to archaic tribal traditions rather than embracing modernity. Truly the Northeasterners are caught in a bind. And that explains why thousands of bright students and young workers from the Region are seeking refuge in the mainland.

CENTRE'S RESPONSE

With a view to bringing the

Northeast out of the current morass, the Government of India has initiated a multi-pronged strategy. Apart from creating separate States and establishment of Northeastern Council, the Centre has been generous with its fund allocation. Today, the NE States which have meager revenue base, are being provided with grant-in-aid upto 90% for all projects, leaving the rest 10% to be met from the State coffers. This special dispensation has enabled the Centre invest annually a whopping Rs 15000 crore in the Region. By any reckoning this is a huge investment. The question may be asked as to where does the money go? This is an uncomfortable question and not many feel comfortable to raise, let alone explain!

In 1990 came the much hyped "Look East Policy" with a two-in-one combo. While it aims to reach out to India's South East Asian neighbours for good diplomatic and strategic reasons, the Policy also ostensibly seeks to develop the Northeast which is the gateway to the countries like Myanmar, Bangladesh, Vietnam etc. This in theory is a win-win situation. However, a reality check will reveal that after a quarter of century , apart from opening a few symbolic border haats with China and Myanmar, precious little has been achieved on the ground. The promise of Trans Asia Highway has remained unfulfilled, although Bangladesh has done its part good one decade ago. The Trans Asian Railway meant to connect Kolkata with Saigon via Northeast has remained a pipe dream. Thanks to the disturbed conditions prevailing in Manipur and Nagaland.

With the change of guard in New Delhi, the policy has acquired a new nomenclature---"Act East Policy". How far this cosmetic change will change things all round remains to be seen.

Against this grim scenario, it is safe to say that lasting peace in the Northeast is still a distant dream.

LIMITED ROLE FOR ROTARY

The critical question is: Is there a role for Rotary? Can Rotary help the Northeast in any manner? Knowing as we all do Rotary's obvious limitations in terms of man and material resources, it will be unrealistic to expect Rotary to make an impact in terms of changing the quality of life of the man in the street. All the same, I earnestly believe in the adage that "nothing ventured nothing achieved". If Rotary is keen on giving it a try, my prescription would be two-fold:

a) Facilitating Rotary's ambitious Rotary Literacy Mission in the remote and inaccessible areas;

b) Falling back on the Rotary Peace Scholars to create a nucleus for setting up a credible public institution to strive for creating public opinion on various issues relevant to restore the elusive peace and progress of the Northeast.

I have no doubt in my mind that if Rotary makes up its mind to get involved with a missionary zeal, it will be able make a difference to the Region.

Rtn. Manas Chaudhuri is a Past District Governor of RI Dist 3240.

Tagore & Graham at "Home" Together…

By Sandip C. Jain,
Editor, Himalayan Times

In its roughly 150 years of its existence as a civil society, Kalimpong can proudly boast of its association with some of the biggest names in modern history- Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, The Roerichs, the royal families of Afghanistan, Burma, Bhutan and Nepal, the Dalai Lama, Rev McFarlane, Younghusband and many more such luminaries but definitely its association with Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. J.A.Graham will be counted as its most cherished and memorable ones.

Gurudev's association with Kalimpong is a special one. By making the first Live Radio Broadcast in India from Kalimpong, Kalimpong's name has been engraved in the history of Telecommunication and Broadcasting in India. He broadcasted his poem "Janmadin" live over All India Radio from Kalimpong and this fact will live on forever but this is something which is well documented and well known to all lovers of this beautiful little town. Dr. Graham on the other hand, can without much hesitation, be credited to be the "Father of Kalimpong" for all the work that he and his associates have done for Kalimpong to make it the place it is today. His tireless and ceaseless efforts laid the foundation for modern Kalimpong. But these efforts and contributions of his too are well described in each and every history book on this town and region.

What is not well know despite being a matter of much interest and high historical value is the close relation that these two great men of history shared. One came from an aristocratic Bengali family, who is acknowledged as one of the greatest poet, writer, artist, philosopher and thinker of all times and whose contribution towards the Independence struggle of India can never be forgotten. The other was a missionary who came into India under the patronage of those very colonial forces who enslaved India. One was a staunch Hindu, the other a devout Christian but the bond, mutual respect and friendship, the two shared was something worth being made into a fine example.

It probably is no coincidence that both these two illustrious men were born in the same year (1861) and died too within a year of each other (1941 & 1942). Though from entirely different cultures, religions, upbringings, countries and societies, the two shared remarkably close views on most of the issues and aspects of life. Since Gurudev was a frequent visitor of Kalimpong, the two had many opportunities to interact with each other and had lengthy discussions on culture, art, music, religion, philosophy, politics as well as

the Independence of India. In fact, despite being closely associated with the then British rulers of India, Dr. Graham was favourably inclined towards a free India as his broadcast in Wellington suggests wherein he advocated that "India and Britain should be co-partners" , which implies he wanted some kind of political freedom to be given to India. It appears that many of Rev. Graham's views regarding the political situation prevailing at that time were coloured by Gurudev and his writings too gave reflection to this fact.

Their main contact was in the year 1938, a few years prior to both of their deaths. Tagore was in Kalimpong recuperating after a serious illness. It was during this period that he made the now famous broadcast over All India Radio on his 77th Birthday. During his stay in Kalimpong, Gurudev was visited by Dr. Graham frequently and they spent long hours sitting on the lawn of Gauripur house, discussing mutual interests. Though it cannot be positively confirmed but it is believed that Dr. Graham was present within the premises of Gauripur house at the moment Gurudev was addressing the Nation over AIR on the occasion of his birthday. It is also believed that during the period Gurudev was sick and recovering in Kalimpong, Dr. Graham made sure that the noble laureate was constantly attended by doctors of the Kalimpong hospital. In the same year, Dr. Graham too fell seriously ill and Rabindranath Tagore showed the same concerns that Dr. Graham had showered on him during his own sickness.

In the year 1941, Tagore fell seriously ill, again in Kalimpong, and had to be rushed to Calcutta for his treatment- this time too Dr. Graham was at hand to arrange things and rush him proper medical care. Later in the year when Gurudev died, Dr. Graham paid glowing tribute to him not only as a poet but also as a musician, preacher, politician and educationalist. Paying tribute to Tagore, Dr. Graham wrote thus, " …for him India is not merely the motherland of Nationalists; she represents great spiritual principal, viz. the fundamental human unity of the diverse people who, whether as original inhabitants, immigrants or conquerors, have made their home on her soil. Above all freedom for India was for Tagore the freedom of her common people from oppression and injustice, foreign or native…..". " He hated the cowardice of the weak as much as he hated the arrogance of the strong, but he was always on the side of the weak against the strong…..".

Dr. knew the Gitanjali well and often quoted from it. The two men, were not just contemporary in age but also in tune with their thinking and philosophy and had much in common- Shantineketan was for Dr. Graham an ideal temple of learning and often wrote about it in his writings. It is believed that when Tagore bought a piece of land in Kalimpong- it was Dr. Graham who suggested that the house built on it, be a replica of Tagore's house in Shantineketan. The house "Chitrabhanu" situated at Atisha Road of Kalimpong is a close copy of Tagore's residence at Shantineketan which is called "Shyamali."

Dr. Graham and Gurudev were two completely different people and of different backgrounds but the common meeting grounds of Kalimpong made them friends whose special relation is still being talked about seventy years after their deaths….

Sandip C. Jain is a writer and businessman. He is editor of Himalayan Times and is a regular contributor to most leading English publications in India, Nepal and Bhuta. He has two books on Kalimpong to his credit and this third book will be released soon. He is also on record the youngest president of the Lions Club of Kalimpong.

Gurudev on A.I.R. on his 'Janmadin' in Kalimpong

The Shankha Mani Pradhan & Hasta Maya Pradhan Humanitarian Rotary Library of Rotary Club of Kalimpong operating from Rotary Centre, Kalimpong, was founded by a generous contribution from Dr. Khem Kumari Fatimi , third daughter of Late Sankha Mani Pradhan & Hasta Maya Pradhan in whose loving memory, the library was established.

Here, Dr. Khem recounts days of her father Sankha Mani Pradhan, the first student to attend Shantiniketan and the influence Gurdev had on him as a young man.

Dr. Khem Fatimi Pradhan, a keen philanthropist, lives in New York with her family.

FIRST NEPALI STUDENT TO ATTEND SHANTINKETAN

Sri Sankha Mani Pradhan was the first Nepali student to attend Shantiniketan, a school founded by Poet Laureate Sri Rabindranath Tagore in 1901, which in 1921 became Visva Bharati University. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1909 for his book of poems, Gitanjali the proceeds of which he used to found the University. While attending Scottish Church College in Calcutta in 1926 Sankha Mani had the privilege of meeting Sri Aurobindinath Tagore, cousin of Poet Laureate

Rabindranath Tagore. He sent him to Shantiniketan to join the Arts College, Kala Bhawan to study Oriental Art, Music and Languages in Shantiniketan

Young Sankhamani was very impressed with the simple life his Guru Rabindranath Tagore preached and practiced. Classes were held in the open air, under the mango groves. He enjoyed the comradery of students from various countries who were studying Art and Sculpture, Languages, Dance, and Music. They met for the weekly prayers at the Upasana Griha, a prayer hall with four entrances made of marble steps, and no walls. It was built by the Guru Tagore's father, Debendranath Tagore. He learned to play the flute and harmonium, and German and French, and practiced art. Like his Guru he had grown his hair shoulder length.

While in Shantiniketan in 1926-27 he had the opportunity to meet famous dignitaries like Rev. C. F. Andrews, Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Lord Halifax, and P.C. Mahalanobis, Scientist and Statistician.

He was enjoying his studies in Shantiniketan, a three year course to graduate from Kala Bhawan. Sadly his dreams were cut short in two years when his older brother, late Paras Mani Pradhan required him to return to help with the Printing Press business in Kalimpong.

He spent the rest of his life operating the printing press, Mani Press, in Kalimpong along with his two brothers, Sesh Mani and Pushpa Mani Pradhan. He used the knowledge acquired from his Art education in Shantiniketan to perfect the aesthetic art of printing. He enjoyed conversations with his clients and relished the exchange of ideas from them. He was proud to have socialized with and cherished his photograph with actress Devika Rani and her husband Artist Scetslav Roerich, and his brother George, a famous Scientist and Orietalist. He made sure to meet faculty from Shantiniketan who visited Tagore House in Kalimpong. He always loved the Arts and Photography, and held in high esteem those that were 'Artistic' and creative. He continued to live a simple Gandhian life practicing "Simple living High thinking". Sankhamani Pradhan always encouraged education, especially to female students. He helped those that need his advice or his references to gain admission into Visva Bharati University. To that end two of his children, Mohan Kumari and Gehendra Mani are graduates from Shantiniketan. Khem Kumari studied there for four months and had to transfer as she was having difficulty with Hindi which was required for I.Sc. Curriculum. Many others from the Pradhan family are alumni including Indra Mani Pradhan, Roshan Pradhan, and Hemlata Pradhan, who has left her mark on drawing plants, specializing in orchids.

During his last years before he expired in 2005 Sankha Mani relived the memories of the precious two years spent in Shantiniketan. He enjoyed relating the stories to those that visited him.

Gurudev In Kalimpong

Monila De

The British and the affluent Indians living in the hot plains of India escaped to the cooler climes of the Himalayas every summer so did the famous bard Rabindranath Tagore.

His preferred destination was Mungpoo but he did grace Kalimpong with his presence twice. Being a good friend of the Raja and Rani of Gouripore he came and lived in Gouripore House at the top of the hill. He arrived as usual with his large entourage of servants and his secretary.

Gouripore House is a mini palace built in the early 1900 s. The architecture of this is most unusual and interesting. The corrugated iron roof is intricately built to give the appearance of manor. Unfortunately it lies in shambles today.

Rabindranath loved the peace and quiet of Kalimpong and the excellent view of the Kanchanjungha from the house. In fact he never left the house although, he was repeatedly invited for lunch or dinner by the residents of Kalimpong among them the most persistent

being Mrs. David Mohon, popularly known as David Babuni. He always declined and asked her to invite his Secretary instead.

The poet loved sitting on the veranda taking in breath taking view of the garland of snow peaks, walking in the beautiful garden, enjoying the natural beauty and serenity of Kalimpong. So many songs and poems must have taken root in his fertile brain during these glorious moments spent in pristine Kalimpong.

He composed a couplet on his birthday and called it Janmadin-Birthday. This was broadcasted on the radio for the first time from Gouripore House in Kalimpong. Loken Bose ,the elder brother of Abani Mohon Bose,the owner of Topoban where the Rotary Club stands was instrumental in transmitting it.

The English translation of the couplet Janmadin, birthday is as follows---

'Today my happiness is full of boundless sound and colour,

Is Kalimpong aware of that? '

Although the poet loved Kalimpong he never built a house here. It was his son Rathindranath Tagore who built his house Chitrabhanu long after his father's death.

Kalimpong will always remember the great poet and feel honoured to have housed such a distinguished guest.

Monila De is a freelance writer based in Kalimpong.

Raageshree Kala Niketan and Gandhi Ashram School are two music schools based in Kalimpong. Both, in their respective areas of specialisation, provide quality music training to young students. Raageshree Kala Niketan will be providing live musical entertainment during Fellowship at Himalayan Hotel on the night of 28-2-2015.

The violin ensemble of Gandhi Ashram School will present a musical program on 1-3-2015 during closing ceremony of MAITREE-II.

Raageshree Kala Niketan, is a music school in Kalimpong which is situated in the hills of Darjeeling District, West Bengal. It was established in the year 1998 by its founder Sri .Yogendra Ghatani a musican of considerable caliber respected not only in the music teaching fraternity but also in the world of music production where his songs have been sung by renowned singers of Nepali music fame.

Raageshree Kala Niketan provides a wide ranging canvas of musical disciplines covering both Western and Eastern music disciplines. In the Eastern music discipline, the school is a valiant attempt towards preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Indian classical music seen from its affiliation to Prayag Sangit Samiti, Allahabad,a registered premier institution under the Indian Societies Registration Act of 1860 which has been founded with the sole aim of popularizing the cause of Indian Classical Music in India. Every year many students from Kalimpong and its neighbouring areas have been appearing for music exams conducted by Prayag Sangit Samiti in vocal and instrumental music and they have passed the examinations with excellence.

Gandhi Ashram School, Kalimpong.

A Himalayan Jesuit Mission School with a musical twist.

The school is situated in rural Kalimpong, in the Eastern Himalayas, close to Darjeeling.

It admits economically disadvantaged students from the locality and provides for a formal education setup upto Grade 8 after which the students are admitted to schools in Kalimpong town.

The uniqueness of the school lies in its instruction in the stringed instruments that is part of the curriculum. The school boasts of a Junior as well as a senior orchestra that has toured big and small cities in India as well as Europe.

The school is currently raising funds to upgrade its location, infrastructure, grades and music program.

Down Memory Lane on "Maitree Express"

PDG J.K. Somani

It is indeed great news that "Maitree" is happening again. Hopefully this event would continue as one of the flagship programmes of our Rotary District 3240. I, as the First Chairman of the event, offer my best wishes to the organizers of Maitree II, which starts on February 28, 2015 at Kalimpong.

What can I say about Maitree? It was indeed a big challenge, perhaps the biggest challenge in my long innings at Rotary. When I first conceptualized the event about 18 months back, everyone with whom I had shared my thought, had perhaps felt that "here was a mad man, who is out of his mind, thinking about an inter-country meet, with hardly any infrastructure and resources". I could read these thoughts in the mind of my colleagues at Rotary. But, it was my persistence, and perhaps my doggedness which helped me to overcome many an obstacle and finally organize the event, which attracted more than 1000 delegates from both within and outside the borders of our country.

How did it all happen? As far as I my knowledge goes, never had such an event been even conceived in our District.

If my memory serves me right (after all I am getting old!!!), the then President of Rotary Club of Bolpur-Santiniketan, Rtn Dinabandhu Singha (2013-14), who like all good Presidents wanted to hold a mega District event during his tenure approached DGE Arijit Endow for allotting the Club a major district event. Arijit, being a very innovative person, had already talked to his batch mates in the neighbouring countries about organizing an event in his District where Rotarians from these countries could come, meet and lay the foundation for some Inter Country Programme amongst them. His thought was on the lines of an Annual SAARC Meet and the venue which everyone thought would attract delegates from the neighbouring countries was Santiniketan - the abode of peace and known all over the world thanks to the Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Arijit even had also some grandiose plan: bringing the then Rotary President Ron D. Burton, Secretary General of SAARC and of course, our own PRIP Kalyan Banerjee and PRID Shekhar Mehta, RI President elect Ravindran, among others.

When this proposal was first discussed at our regular Club meeting, there was both a sense of joy and pride that the Club was getting such an opportunity to host an international event of such magnitude. There was also a hidden fear: will we be able to pull it off, given our meagre resources and inadequate infrastructure at Bolpur. There was also the question from where would we be able to generate the necessary finances to organize such an event?

To cut a long story short, the members of the Club used all their convincing powers to rope me in despite

all my excuses and made me the Chairman of the Organising Committee. I knew that I was heading for some big trouble, but as we all know the old adage "where there is a will there is a way". I took it up as an opportunity to rejuvenate the Club and bring it to limelight. In the process, I also thought that I would be able to keep my health problem on the back burner at least for sometime.

In this context, I would like to mention here that when you have a right purpose and are on the right lane, nothing is impossible. You get some fellow travelers together to share the load.

In the initial planning stage, despite many a hiccup, we got tremendous support and encouragement from our dear friend PDG Angshuman Bandyopadhyay of 3291, who regularly visits Santiniketan. We knew that being based in Kolkata, he had the knowledge and expertise in organizing big events in and outside his district. Without his valuable guidance and involvement at each and every stage, I wonder whether we would have been able to make any progress.

My Good Friend Arijit, after entrusting the responsibility to the Club, also did not sit tight and took time out of his busy schedule and visit Santiniketan on numerous occasions and also provided us the necessary encouragement and financial support.

Maitree means Friendship. The train that runs between India and Bangaldesh is also christened by the same name. It was a unanimous choice that we should call this event by a name that binds people across countries and what better name than Maitree. No wonder that as I sit down to jot my thoughts I feel as if I am aboard the Maitree Express!!

How can I forget the tremendous effort of our current Governor Rtn Swapan Kumar Chowdhury, who as Chairman, Promotion did his best to promote the event in and outside the district. The major breakthrough came at the first Literacy Summit held at Delhi in December 2013 from where we received the first batch of 55 registrations from Bangladesh alone and an assurance of another 300-400! For an event to take place in February 2014 this was the first en bloc registration from another country and we could finally hope that we were going to have a Rotary Inter Country Meet, which until then was looking like becoming just another intra-country meet! He was helped in his effort by PP Rtn Subir Roy and Rtn Swapnendu Mustafi.

When you organize an international event, you need a computer savvy man. I have no hesitation in admitting that I am not one such person. Here I would like to mention the stupendous help that was extended by Rtn. Subhasish Chatterjee (known as Raja). Looking back, I wonder whether we would have succeeded in publicizing the event in the manner that he eventually did through Facebook and other social media. I was amazed about his personal acquaintance and rapport with most of the RI dignitaries and speakers who were in our wish list as Invitees. He along with his charming wife Puja helped us tremendously at every stage and more particularly in the stage decoration and back stage management. He proved to my Man Friday, always there whenever I needed him and with a smile on his face.

Raja continues to work with the same zeal and enthusiasm for Maitree-II, which he has taken up as one of his "own" project. He is, of course, being supported at every stage by our Gov Swapan and the host Club. I wonder how he manages the work, being based at Hyderabad and moving around almost the whole country whether on his work or on Rotary work.

Now let me try and give you some of the high points of the event:

- It was organised at a state-of-the-art auditorium Gitanjali with a seating capacity of just about 700, where we had over 1000 registrations – more than half from our neighbouring countries. The Hall was packed to the brim during the Inaugural Session and also during some of the other plenary sessions and cultural programs.
- Among the Prominent RI Dignitaries who attended and addressed the Meet were Past President Kalyan Banerjee, Past President and the then Chair of the Rotary Foundation D.K. Lee from South Korea, Past RI Director Shekhar Mehta. It was a lifetime experience for many of the attendees to be part of a Rotary District program, wherein there were two Past RI Presidents and a Past Director.
- Our own District was represented by many a Past, Present and future RI Officers. It included our first Governor Ramesh P. Agarwal, Dr. K.R. Dey, Dr. Tapan Ray, Samir Choudhury, D.N. Lohia, Ashok Agarwal, Arijit Endow, Swapan Chowdhury, Rinku Guha Neogy among others.
- The other Districts in India were not lagging behind. Rotarians and Anns from our neighbouring District 3291 along with PDGs Angshuman Bandyopadhyay, Debasish Mitra, DG Rajani Mukherjee , and also some distinguished PDGs from Bangladesh : Monzurul Hoque Chowdhury and others, PDG Aswini Kar from 3262, PDG Varahalu Basava from 3020(A.P.),
- Other than RI Dignitaries, we had the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Visva Bharati Prof Sushanta Dattagupta, MIC Krishnendu Chowdhury, Mahfuz Anam, Managing Editor of The Daily Star a leading Bangladesh English Newspaper, Dr Bijay Sahoo, Chairman of Sai International School, Bhubaneswar were some of the eminent speakers who addressed the Meet.
- Those who were not able to attend due to some last minute change in the schedule, were our Hon'ble President of India Sri Pranab Mukherjee, PDG Aziz Memon from Pakistan, DG Ghulam Mustafa, DGE Safina Rahman, RID 3281, among others.
- A beautiful and presentable souvenir with thought-provoking articles, edited by Rtn Dr. Mainak Mukherjee from Burdwan

Greater was another highlight of the Meet.

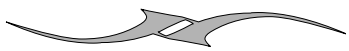
- A Declaration of Solidarity was signed by most of the RI Dignitaries present.
- Colourful and well rehearsed and choreographed Cultural programs were presented by local, Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi Rotarians, specially the Theme Song and Dance – Mile Sur Mera Tumhara based on the concept of mutual cooperation and national integration under the direction of Mrs. Jaya Bandyopadhay (wife of PDG Angshuman-3291) was one of the many talking points. The music and dance show based on culture of South Asian countries presented by a Dance Centre for Sri Lanka and India led by Mrs. Chandani Kasturi wife of Rtn. Premjit Singh, drew applause from one and all.

Now, as I look back, there is a bit of introspection. What did we finally derive from the event? What is our take from it?

To arrive at a critical analysis, one must admit, without any hesitation, that we had a wonderful fellowship, some thought stimulating presentations, deliberation of the highest order, etc.etc. As our main object was to foster international understanding, goodwill and peace between and among the people of the neighbouring countries, one thing I can say with certainty is that the Meet enabled us to develop very cordial relations with at least our Bangladeshi Rotarians.

The meet also laid a good foundation for some Inter Country Program between Bangladesh and this part of the country for mutual cooperation and development for working together in some areas of our focus like literacy, health, women empowerment etc. which can be strengthened through programs like Family. Youth, cultural exchange.

Nothing fructifies in one or two meetings. It has to be a continuous and consistent effort. I hope that Maitree-II would not have taken place, if it did not inspire and motivate many of us for an encore. I sincerely hope that Maitree II would pave the way for the work that been initiated in the 2014 Event. All the best to the delegates attending Maitree-II.



"It is easier to interest men in war than in peace; it therefore requires more moral courage to talk peace than war."

— Rotary Just at the Threshold, THE ROTARIAN, February 1917.

..... in passing

I grew up in a multi-cultural and multi-ethno background. As children, we looked forward to celebrating the myriad of Indian festivals, like the Diwali, Dasai, Onam, Christmas and Vishu. Many of my family members have married into different cultures and communities.

Ema Datshi, sits cheek by jowl on our dining table with *idli* and *sambhar* or *pork vindaloo*. We speak a multitude of languages at home, English, Nepali, Malayalam..... Therefore when I joined Rotary Club of Kalimpong, it was merely an extension of my diverse family.

Diversity can be defined as people coming together from different races, nationalities, religions and sexes to form a group, organization or community. A diverse organization such as Rotary, is one that values the difference in people. It is one that recognizes that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions. Diverse organizations encourage and harness these differences to make their services relevant and approachable. Diverse organizations draw upon the widest possible range of views and experiences so it can listen to and meet the changing needs of its users. The encouragement of diversity benefits society.

"Diversity" is what sparked my interest in Rotary. Sadly, "Diversity "is also the reason for conflicts around the world . All the world's armed conflicts since 1988, with the exception of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, have been over internal ethnic issues. In fact since 1945, ethnic conflicts have claimed some 16 million lives, several times more than those dead in inter-state wars. At present, ethnic conflicts span three old continents, Asia, Africa and Europe. Typical examples are those in Burma and Sri Lanka in Asia; Somalia, Sudan and Rwanda in Africa, the former USSR and Yugoslavia in Europe.

A commitment among individuals, organizations, and institutions to valuing diversity is essential for healthy communities. Changing people's attitudes and

institutional practices is hard but it is necessary to change this mindset. We must work to ensure that diversity is valued and included in the government's mission statement. Credible leaders must take a public stand to promote and validate the effort. Conducting public forums and events such as the Maitree series of seminars, will increase awareness and reduce racial prejudice. Working in a coalition made up of a cross-section of leaders and developing a clear plan will move our community towards a more sustainable effort to eliminate racism. Changes will not happen overnight, but we can begin to take small steps towards making a difference.

Rtn. Rajen Raghavan
Editor

THE OBJECT OF ROTARY

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

- FIRST: The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;
- SECOND: High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;
- THIRD: The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;
- FOURTH: The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

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Into the land of freedom, my Father, let my
Country awake." - **Rabindranath Tagore**

rtn. rajen raghavan
RotaryKalimpong

“Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved by understanding”-

Albert Einstein

Greetings to all friends attending MAITREE-II

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“It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it.
And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it”-

Eleanor Roosevelt

With Good Wishes for a Grand Success

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Warm Greetings

To all attending MAITREE-II
In our beautiful town of Kalimpong

Rotaryanne Arati & Rotarian Kamal Bajla

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"The more we sweat in peace, the less we bleed in war."-

Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit

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"Nothing that I can do will change the structure of the universe. But maybe, by raising my voice I can help the greatest of all causes - goodwill among men and peace on earth."

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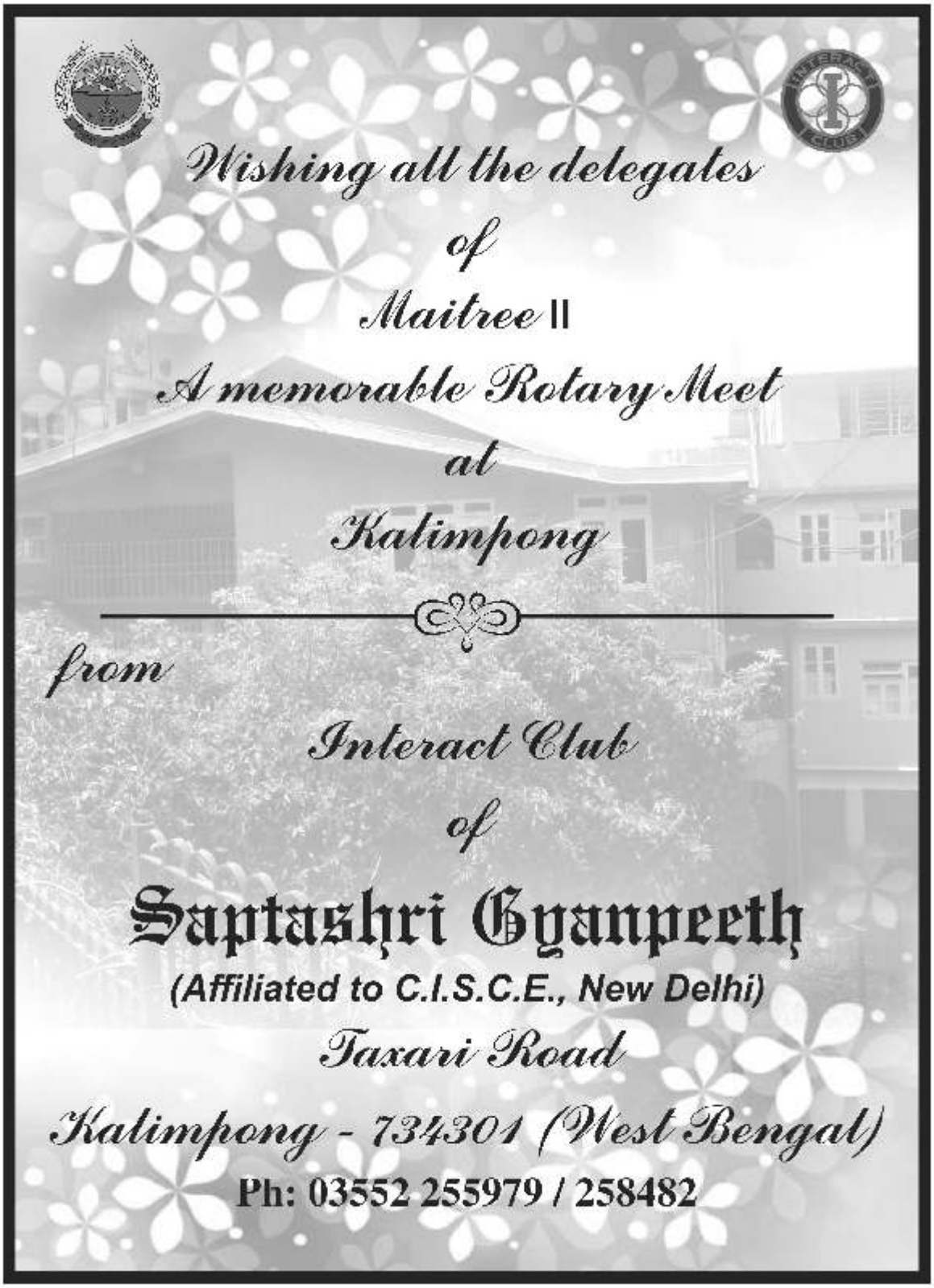
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Winston Churchill

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TO

ROTARY CLUB OF KALIMPONG

&

ALL ROTARIANS ATTENDING MAITREE-II

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Wishing MAITREE-II a Grand Success

The Rotary Family @ ROTARY CLUB OF GANGTOK
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“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other”.

Mother Teresa

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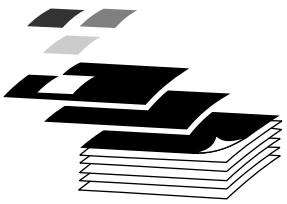

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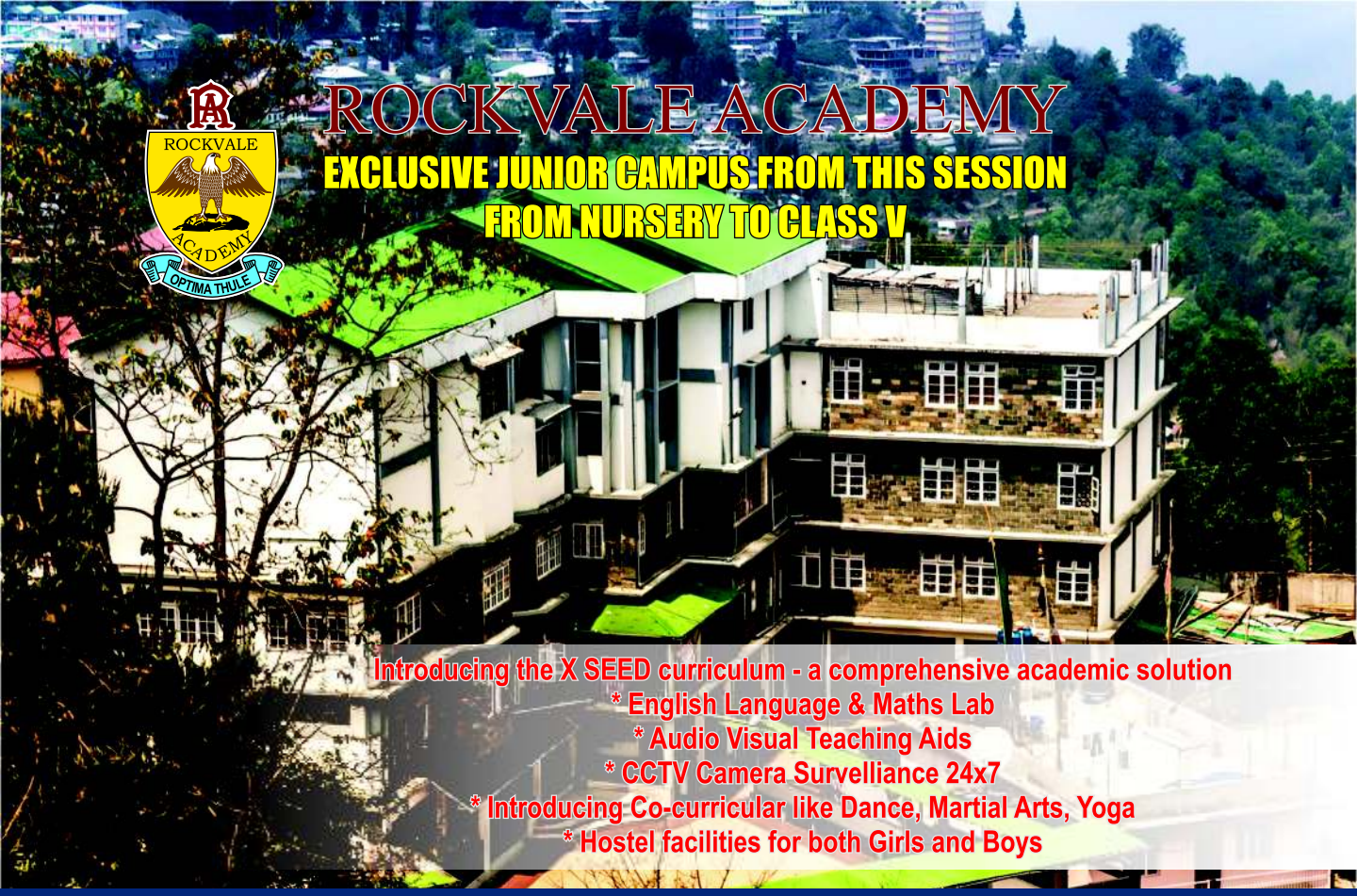

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